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The deduced amino acid sequence of ORFV2-VEGF was aligned with the sequences of VEGF₁₂₁ (SEQ ID NO:3), VEGF₁₆₅ (SEQ ID NO:4), PlGF (SEQ ID NO:5), VEGF-B₁₆₇ (SEQ ID NO:6), and truncated sequences of VEGF-C (SEQ ID NO:7) and VEGF-D (SEQ ID NO:8). Alignment of the predicted amino acid sequence of ORFV2-VEGF (SEQ ID NO:2) with members of the VEGF family demonstrates that ORFV2-VEGF has a high degree of sequence homology with the VEGF homology domain (VHD) of this family of proteins. ORFV2-VEGF contains all six cysteine residues of the cystine-knot motif which are absolutely conserved among family members. The conserved cysteine residues of the cystine knot motif are indicated with an asterisk (*). Several other invariant or highly conserved amino acids are indicated. ORFV2-VEGF does not contain the extended N- and C-terminal regions seen in VEGF-C and VEGF-D. Overall, ORFV2-VEGF is 43.3%, 34.3%, 25.4%, 26.9% and 33.6% identical to human VEGF₁₆₅ (SEQ ID NO:4), VEGF-B (SEQ ID NO:6), VEGF-C (SEQ ID NO:7), VEGF-D (SEQ ID NO:8) and PlGF (SEQ ID NO:5), respectively. The amino acid sequence of ORFV2-VEGF is 87% identical to NZ10. This sequence similarity of ORFV2-VEGF and NZ10 to the mammalian VEGFs raises the question of whether the structural relatedness extends to receptor binding and biological function.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 7 and 54 as follows (a marked-up version of the amended claims is attached hereto):

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10 1. (Amended) A method for stimulating proliferation of endothelial or mesodermal cells, wherein the cells bear VEGF receptor 2, comprising activating the receptor via exposing said endothelial^{or mesodermal} cells to an effective receptor-activating amount of a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of ORFV2-VEGF and NZ10, thereby stimulating the proliferation of the cells.

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13 7. (Amended) A method for modulating vascular permeability, comprising the step of administering an effective vascular permeability-modulating amount of an NZ10 polypeptide.

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14 54. (Amended) A method for stimulating proliferation of endothelial or mesodermal cells, comprising the step of exposing the endothelial^{or mesodermal} cells to an effective endothelial or mesodermal cell proliferation-stimulating amount of a NZ10 polypeptide.

Please add the following new claims:

- 11 57. (New) The method of Claim ~~1~~¹⁰ wherein the polypeptide is NZ10.
- 12 58. (New) The method of Claim ~~5~~⁶ wherein the polypeptide is ORFV2-VEGF.
- 13 59. (New) The method of Claim ~~5~~⁶ wherein the polypeptide is NZ10.
- 15 60. (New) A method for modulating permeability of a vascular system in an animal in need thereof, wherein endothelial cells of the vascular system bear VEGF receptor 2, comprising activating the receptor via exposing said endothelial cells to an effective receptor-activating amount of a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of ORFV2-VEGF and NZ10, thereby modulating vascular permeability.
- 16 61. (New) The method of Claim ~~60~~¹⁵, wherein the polypeptide is ORFV2-VEGF.
- 17 62. (New) The method of Claim ~~60~~¹⁵, wherein the polypeptide is NZ10.

IN THE DRAWINGS:

A Request for Permission to Amend the Drawings is submitted herewith.

(Applicant's Remarks are set forth hereinbelow, starting on the following page.)